

the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 6997 of May 1, 1997

Loyalty Day, 1997

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

Each year, Americans dedicate the first day of May to formally acknowledge our love for this great land and our loyalty to the principles of freedom and equality on which our Nation was founded. This love and loyalty cannot be mandated or legislated; rather, these traits spring freely from our hearts and minds.

Looking back across the centuries, we recognize that each generation of Americans has been called upon to express its love and loyalty in a unique way. Our founders, defying the forces of tyranny, solemnly pledged their lives and futures to defend the new Nation they had created, a Nation born of reverence for human rights and the principle of self-determination. Less than a century later, another generation of Americans spilled its blood to preserve the unity of our Nation and to ensure that America lived up to its ideals of freedom, justice, and equality.

The challenges of our own century have called for an extraordinary measure of devotion from millions of our citizens. Through two devastating world wars and the decades of the Cold War, Americans laid down their lives for love of country and to defend democracy, advance human rights, and oppose the specter of oppression.

Today we are blessed to be living in a time of unprecedented peace and possibility, when the ideals of democracy and human dignity so eloquently articulated by our founders have been widely embraced by nations in our own hemisphere and around the world. But we have fresh opportunities to prove our love and loyalty to America. The challenge for our generation is to realize the promise of our Nation: to be a strong and steady influence for peace and freedom across the globe; to be a powerful voice for human rights wherever they are silenced; to live up to America's promise of justice, equality, and opportunity by ensuring that all of our people have the tools and encouragement they need to meet their God-given potential.

The Congress, by Public Law 85-529, has designated May 1 of each year as "Loyalty Day." Let us, on this day, remember the contributions of the many courageous Americans who have gone before us, and let us keep faith with them by reaffirming our love for and loyalty to this Nation they sustained with their service and sacrifice.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 1, 1997, as Loyalty Day. I urge all Americans to recall, on this day, the valor and selflessness of all those who made this Nation so worthy of our love and loyalty. I call upon Gov-

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ernment officials to display the flag of the United States and to participate in patriotic activities in support of this national observance.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of May, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 6998 of May 5, 1997

Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month, 1997

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

Today, almost 10 million Americans can trace their roots to Asia and the Pacific Islands. This month provides a wonderful opportunity to recognize and celebrate all the ways in which Asian and Pacific Americans have enhanced our Nation and strengthened our communities.

North America was visited regularly by Asian and Pacific traders as early as the 16th century, and by the late 1800s, this continent was receiving large numbers of immigrants from China, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, and the Indian subcontinent. These settlers worked hard, turning wilderness into bountiful farmland in Hawaii, opening new industries in the West, and helping to build the first transcontinental railroad.

Along with a vast array of skills, Americans of Asian and Pacific Island ancestry brought their remarkable traditions of hard work and respect for family and education to their new country. Their belief in the American Dream of equality and opportunity enabled them to face the challenges of adversity and discrimination and achieve a record of distinguished service in all fields, from academia to government, from business to the military, and medicine to the arts. These people and their children managed to preserve the rich legacy of their homelands while also embracing the best values and traditions that define our Nation.

In recent years, newly arrived groups of Asian and Pacific peoples have continued to enrich our proud tradition of cultural diversity and endow our Nation with energy and vision. Today, as we prepare to enter the 21st century, we must continually strive to fulfill the ideals that originally attracted so many immigrants to our shores.

To honor the accomplishments of Asian and Pacific Americans and to recognize their many contributions to our Nation, the Congress, by Public Law 102-450, has designated the month of May as "Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 1997 as Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this occasion with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.